STATE OF UTAH
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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INDOOR RADON REPORT

DIVISION OF RADIATION CONTROL (DRC)

STUDENTS ILLUSTRATE DANGERS OF RADON GAS

GOVERNOR HUNTSMAN DECLARES JANUARY 2009 "RADON ACTION MONTH"

Utah students are using their talents to warn others of the dangers of indoor radon gas. During the month of October, the Division of Radiation Control (DRC) received 138 creative art pieces from students entering the EPA National Radon Poster Contest. Each poster illustrated a quality of uniqueness, hard work, and awareness of the dangers of indoor radon.

Radon is a cancer-causing naturally occurring radioactive gas that is undetectable by sight, smell, or taste. The U.S. Surgeon General has declared radon to be the second leading cause of lung cancer and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers in the United States.

The students' art pieces were displayed at the Whitmore County Library and the Department of Environmental Quality for public viewing and voting. Three winning posters were selected for content accuracy, visual communication of a specific topic, poster reproducibility for possible publication, and originality.

In November, the Division announced the three state radon poster contest winners and congratulated first-place winner Emma Sorensen, Centennial Middle School; second-place winner Taite Haynes, Centennial Middle School; and third-place winner Courtney Morgan, South Jordan Middle School (see p. 2 for pictures).

On December 3, the three winners and their parents, along with Centennial Middle School teacher Lynn Tromley, were invited to the Governor's office where they were honored by Governor Huntsman; Rick Sprott, Executive Director of the Department of Environmental Quality; and John Hultquist, DRC Radon Manager for outstanding work in promoting radon awareness.

To continue efforts in raising indoor radon awareness and to encourage Utahns to test for radon, Governor Huntsman has declared January 2009 "Radon Action Month."

Testing is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk from radon. Testing is inexpensive and easy. During January, the Division will be offering discounted Radon Test Kits online for $6.00 a kit/per household.

To order a kit or receive more information, please visit the Division's Web site or call:
http://www.radon.utah.gov
Radon Hotline: 800-458-0145

UTAH'S "RADON ACTION MONTH" ACTIVITIES

DRC INVITES COMMUNITY GROUPS TO CALL AND SCHEDULE AN EVENT

Jan 5-11 — KODJ and KOSY Radio Radon Campaign

Jan 6 — Radon Presentation at Huntsman Cancer Institute, 12:00 noon (Public invited)

Jan 20—Exit Realty Exclusive, Continuing Education Course

Jan 21 — Radon Presentation, Elder Quest, Chillon Reception Center, 7th E. Ctr. St, Spanish Fork (Public invited)

Jan 19-30 — SL City Library, Public Information Session (Public Invited)

Jan 26 — Park City Board of Realtors, Continuing Education Course

To schedule a radon class or presentation, contact us at: www.ckeyser@utah.gov or 801-536-0091

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

Manager: John Hultquist

Editor: Christine Keyser

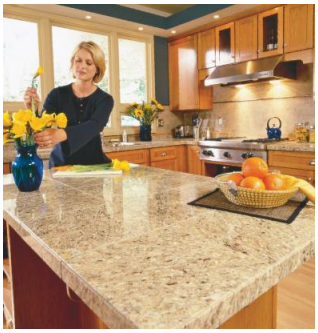
GRANITE COUNTERTOPS AND RADON GAS

Radon Risk—The primary concern about indoor radon gas is the increased risk of lung cancer that exists from breathing radon and its by-products. The magnitude of the risk depends on the radon concentration in the air you breathe and how long you are breathing it. Radon gas is a serious national concern. The risk of radon-related lung cancer increases the longer you are exposed, although any exposure to radon poses some risk.

Testing for radon in the air you breathe should be a high priority and the first step for anyone concerned about radon gas.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not believe sufficient data exists to conclude that the types of granite commonly used in countertops are significantly increasing indoor radon levels.

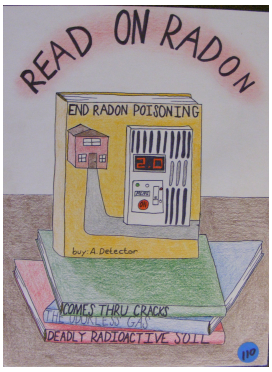
A recent scientific study conducted by Environmental Health & Engineering (EH & E) concluded that radon and radiation emissions from types of granite that comprise a vast majority of the U.S. market fall well below average background levels. EH & E scientists conducted more than 400 tests of 115 varieties of stones typically used for granite countertops in the United States. The results indicated (1) external doses of ionizing radiation emitted from granite countertops are well below levels that would pose a health concern and (2) contributions from granite countertops to radon levels in homes are lower than background levels of radon exposure typically found outdoors and indoors.



Radon Sources—Soil, sand, and rock underneath the home are the primary sources of indoor radon gas. The soil under a house always contains traces of uranium that eventually decays into radium that then decays directly into radon. This soil constitutes an enormous surface area for release of radon gas into the air and into buildings. Materials inside a building such as concrete, granite, slate, marble, sand, shale and other stones can also contain traces of radium that release radon with varying intensities. While natural rocks such as granite may emit some radon gas, the subsequent levels of radon in the building that are attributable to such sources are not typically high. The contribution from building materials to the indoor radon concentration is very dependent upon the building ventilation rate.

Appropriate Radon Testing Methods—Direct measurements in a building of the gamma radiation or radon emanation from a material, such as granite, is not a reliable indicator of radon concentrations that will be in the air you breathe. Attempts to use such measurements for estimating risk are subject to large errors. Diagnostic measurements of the radon in the air you breathe can provide better risk estimates. Perform a radon measurement according to testing protocols specified by EPA. At the same time, perform another test in the room where the granite countertop or other suspect building material exists. If test results are above the EPA recommended action levels, retest these areas to confirm initial results.

Sources: The Science and Technical Committee of the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists, *Granite Countertops and Radon Gas*, August 2008; Environmental Health & Engineering, Inc., *Assessing Exposure to Radon and Radiation from Granite Countertops*, November 2008.

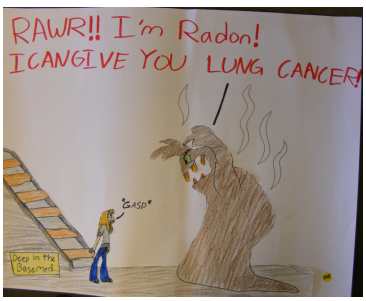


1st—Emma Sorensen
"Read on Radon"

2nd—Taite Haynes
"Test for Radon in Your Home"

2009 Radon Poster Contest Winners

(continued from p. 1)



3rd —Courtney Morgan
"Rawr!"